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Steaming

Steaming (barumbung) is a ritual which prepares bride and groom for their future union. At that time they are still each in his own house. Under the house a pot with water is placed on [801] the fire, and seven different kinds of leaves are placed in it. The steam is conducted upward through a hollow bamboo pipe toward a hole in the floor in the hindmost part of the house. The bride (or the bridegroom) is seated above this hole, completely wrapped in a sarong. The bride's mother scatters puffed rice over her and moves the incense vessel around her, three times one way and once the other. While doing so, she mumbles a spell. When the bride has sat in this way for some time and has perspired profusely, she is bathed. This is repeated for three days on end. It is believed that in this way even the evil that is deep within her will come out with the sweat so that only the good will remain. It is hoped that thus she will be able to face the coming period of uncertainty in the best possible condition.

Plucking the Eyebrows

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The plucking of eyebrows (bubu') is likewise done before the couple is brought together. On this occasion the bride's mother removes the hairs which would make the eyebrow "not good." It is believed that a person's character is revealed in
826 his glance, and also by the features around his eye. In view of
828 the fact that even an exchange of words between young men
[834] and women is prohibited, the casting of glances is practically the only thing that can be done with impunity. The slight arching of an eyebrow and lowering of the eyelids have their significance. To be greedy of eye (balala matana) is regarded
585 as an inferior quality of a young man. In this ritual the im-
826 portance of the eye and the play of the eyes accordingly finds
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